

2 STERILIZATION AND CLEANLINESS

Personal Cleanliness

Many diseases can be spread from one person to another. These diseases can cause colds, influenza, mouth sores, and fatal diseases such as Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. This is why it is very important not to spread germs from one patient to another, or to you. It is important to disinfect equipment and yourself between patients.

This begins with hand washing. Those people having patient contact should use soap and water after every patient. If you do not have water, you can also use an alcohol based cleaner on your hands. Rubber gloves can also help prevent disease transmission. Do not reuse gloves for different patients.

Instruments

Some instruments can be cleaned and reused; others cannot. If instruments can be washed thoroughly, then they can be reused. Instruments that have only been exposed to saliva may be washed with water and disinfectant or soap. If the instrument is suspected to have come in contact with blood, it should be sterilized. First, remove any visible tissue and blood. Then disinfect them using an electric sterilizer (such as KAVO). If this is not a choice, boil the instruments for 5 minutes. If the instrument cannot withstand heat then wipe the surface well with disinfectant. You can use something locally available such as dilute bleach (3ml bleach per 1 L water) or iodine. The instruments should then be kept covered so they do not become contaminated. Hypodermic needles must never be reused on different patients.